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Hongkong, 1st November, 1891.

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Hongkong, January 18th, 1891.

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Letters on Editorial matters to be sent to "The Editor" and not to individual members of the staff.

Communications intended for publication must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as evidence of good faith.

While the columns of the Hongkong Telegraph will always be open for the fair discussion by correspondents of all questions affecting public interests, it must be distinctly understood that the Editor does not in any way hold himself responsible for opinions thus expressed.

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Advertisers are requested to forward all notices intended for insertion in this paper not later than Three o'clock on the day preceding the day of publication, and to be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as evidence of good faith.

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The Hongkong Telegraph.

HONGKONG, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1891.

TELEGRAMS.

CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND.

LONDON, November 9th.

Mr. W. L. Jackson, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, has been appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir John E. Gorst replacing him at the Treasury.

LOCAL AND GENERAL.

THE steamships *Arctura* and *Namoa* went over to the Cosmopolitan Dock to-day.THE U.S.S. *Albatross* was at Amoy when the *Italian* (Capt. S. Ashton) sailed thence for Swatow, and Hongkong on the 9th inst.

AN Emergency meeting of the Victoria Precinct will be held in Freemasons' Hall, Zetland Street, this evening, at 8.30 for 9 o'clock precisely. Visiting Brethren are cordially invited to attend.

So a number of "red coats" are going to take it out of the *Telegraph* publishing the letter in last night's issue which referred to Major-General Digby Barker as "Humpty Dumpty." "Right, boys, come on! We have hundreds of Highlanders ready to meet you on even terms, and if that won't do, why we will step in the arena and—"

THE Steam Launch-Company have commenced running two of their launches between Hongkong and Yau-mai every half hour, from 6 a.m. to 7.30 a.m. and from 8.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. This is, we think, a wise departure on the part of the Directorate. The launches start from Pottinger street wharf and the bamboo pier at Yau-mai opposite the Harbour Office.

We hear that, with a view to upsetting the proverbial apple cart, some shipowners are moving to be allowed to work cargo on Sundays without the permit now insisted on. Providing they pay the pilot, e.g. relieve the captain, officers, engineers and crew from work during the entire day. Don't they wish they were fit? Comment *vous portez-vous, Mac?* Barker?

AN officer writes to know "whether bumpkins can be prosecuted for smuggling liquor on board ships contrary to the orders of the Master or Chief Officer." You can't "go for" the bumpkins, but you can knock spots out of their proprietor if you go about your business in the proper way. Summon the man for "boarding or approaching the ship without the captain's permission."

THE Scottish Oriental Co.'s steamer *Tatishew* (Captain R. Unsworth) has returned to Hongkong from Vancouver, her coastal charter having expired. She will, it is understood, resume duty on the Bangkok line as soon as she has been "touched up" by the dock company. She is now in the Hungnam Canal Company's Home.

THAT dear old lady—the object of adoration by an entire nation of hundreds of millions of harmless and peace-loving people—the Empress Dowager of China, (Young Kwang Su's grandmother) celebrated her 70th anniversary of her birth in this wicked, wicked world, to-day in Peking. God bless her! China Town is not on fire—the populace have plenty of business to attend to, and no time for puppet shows.

WE hear that there is some likelihood of Mr. Chan-cho's resignation of the post of Manager of the Tai O Shipping Company not being accepted at the extraordinary meeting of shareholders to be held on Monday the 18th inst.; as, apart from the success with which the new Canton river liner has been run by him for the past half year, he is, it is generally admitted, the right man in the right place.

THE proprietor of one of the native banks who failed and decamped last year, is charged to a large stone at the door of the Magistrate's yamen in the city. A placard, close by, intimates that he is to be released when he has cashed the notes issued by him, which are said to be of the value of \$2,000. He attributed his losses to advances made to him by the bank, which he was unable to repay him—*Foohow Echo*.

AN engineering journal commenting on the proposal for the Linking of Telegraph Lines between India and China, says that this subject has long engaged the attention of the Supreme Government, but through frivolous excuses put forward by the Foreign Office at Peking, this question has been so long delayed. But owing to recent outrages and mischief committed by the Celestials the British Minister in Peking has strongly urged on the Colonial Government the necessity for a connection, and the Indian and Burma Governments are likewise pressing the demand. The line is now laid to Mowat, almost up to the Burmo-Chinese frontier, and as the British Government are always ignorant of what transpires in southern China the importance of this connection cannot be over-estimated.

THE history of the recent Bengal gold mining mania seems to have repeated itself in Siam. The Gold Field of Siam has been compelled to suspend operations. The history of the Company, as told in a report recently issued in Siam, says *Indian Engineering*, and one, circulated to strengthen the feeling that gold mining, at least in the East and Far East, is a delusion and a snare. The usual stories of the almost fabulous riches that lay buried and only waiting to be dug were propagated, and Experts in whom they had the greatest confidence, confirmed this view, and a Mining Engineer of high repute was engaged to realize it. The outcome is a sorrowful report with veritable evidence of the "wash dirt" kind.

A REGULAR meeting of Diligentia Lodge of Instruction, will be held in Freemasons' Hall, Zetland Street, to-morrow, at 5.30 p.m. precisely. Visiting Brethren are cordially invited.

AN inquiry held at the Magistrate's this afternoon into the circumstances connected with the sudden death of the late Steward of the Club, Mr. Bond, on the 12th ultimo, was adjourned for a week in order that the Government Analyst, Mr. Crowe, might have time to furnish the contents of the deceased's stomach, which appears to have contained poison. Doctor Crowe and Mr. Bond, the bar-boy and the boy who took a cup of tea to Mr. Bond shortly before he was taken suddenly ill, were examined at length, as also the deceased's step-son.

THE other day some Continental journalists were pointing to the remarkable mail record over the Canadian route from Yokohama as an indication of Lord Salisbury's desire to show Britain's growing independence of the Suez Canal as a route to the East. The idea was, of course, far-fetched; but it is likely to gain strength from the fact that the War Office has just requested the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to submit proposals for the conduct of British troops over the line from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Should the proposals be acceptable it is intended to test the route towards the close of the present year by the transit of troops from the Station at Halifax (Nova Scotia) to the naval station on the Pacific coast, where troops would be available to complete the journey to the East.—*L. & C. Express*.

We have great pleasure in announcing that the Italian Convention will give on November 12th a representation of "The Prophet of Hebron," to which the general public is invited, a small contribution of \$3 per head being requested for the support of the Orphanage and School. Conventions are not in themselves institutions that meet our approval, so that it is with some misgiving that we move to the consideration of the chief of the troupe, the musical attractions of the Italian Convention melodramas are of an intrinsic value which in such a desolate out-of-the-way wilderness as Hongkong is always highly appreciated by all who can be touched by music. From the neatly engrossed programme forwarded to us it would seem that the Oratorio is a most imposing work, something on the lines of "John the Baptist." There are five acts, and thirty-eight scenes, the prose being in English and the songs in Italian. The subject is chiefly the life of Herodias and the Temptation, in which John came to grief. The performance commences at 5.30 p.m. to-morrow, and for the sake of this most deserving charity we shall hope to see a large audience.

MESSRS. Leonieff and Patrine, two South Russian landowners, started away recently to cross Asia in the saddle. The starting point is Tiflis, and the objective point Saigon. From China the travellers will return to Russia via the Pacific, San Francisco, and New York. Mr. Leonieff is a lieutenant in a guard regiment. He is a little apprehensive that the British Indian authorities might suspect him and his companion of being engaged on some political mission, whereas their journey is simply a pleasure trip round the world. Mr. Leonieff thought that by mentioning being made of the nature of their journey the Indian frontier authorities would be advised of their coming. That these gentlemen have no political mission is positively asserted. They have, in fact, no idea what route they will take from Tiflis. They would preferably go across Afghanistan (if there were any reasonable chance of their coming out alive on the other side). The travellers are equipped with Kodak cameras, and will keep a journal of their progress. Mr. Leonieff approximately calculated that the whole journey would occupy about nine months. The travellers expected to meet Colonel Wells (of the Indo-European Telegraphs) and Colonel Littleale at Tiflis, and in that case they will proceed together in the saddle as far as Tiflis.

OUR excellent friends the Hongkong Trading Company have started on a new crusade. They supply everything, at the lowest possible rates, from a piano to a toothpick, and they have now decided to supply poetry by the yard. Here is the latest contribution from the busy bee-hive in Queen's Road:—

You ask me the reason I wear a Felt hat:

'Tis for lightness I wear it, what think you of that?

So light is its weight that no head-ache I rue;

So light is its expense that it wears me out too;

So light is its colour that it never looks dusty;

So light though I treat it, it never rides rusty;

So light is its fashion, its shape, and its size;

So light is its twisting, its turning, and its tying;

So light is its beaver, its binding, and lining;

So light is a figure, so light to a letter,

And, if I might my excuse, you won't light one better.

HONGKONG TRADING CO., LD.,

Hatters and Outfitters.

THE *London & China Express* thus does

honour to one of the best known and most

popular Yanks in the East.—In the current

number of *Lippincott's* Mr. Edward Sedloe

contributes a short account of "A Tiffin with a Taoist." The writer does not libel the knowl-

edge of the average person when he when he

singles out the Taoist. "What's the Taoist?"

Who's a Taoist? He tells us succinctly that a

Taoist is a noon-day meal, but he draws a very

wide distinction between the European and

the Chinese tiffin. The former he describes

as generally heavy and cumbersome affair,

which combines all the bad points of an

English breakfast, a French dinner, and

an Oriental supper. As given by a Chinese

official it is a repeat entirely of the

form of invitation, the ceremony observed by

the guest in keeping the appointment, are

subject to rules of etiquette compared with

the rules of the most polite society in this

country are mere simplicity itself. As to the tiffin,

the writer tells us the number of courses is anywhere

between fifty and two hundred. This statement

prepares the readers for the further one

that the Chinese nobility retire regularly to a

vomitorium in order to make room for the next

instalment of the feast! We also told

that the Taoist siles your plate full of food

every two minutes, and the guest in turn is

expected to do the same to him. The writer

tells us that on one occasion he covered a lot

of oysters on his host's plate with a quantity of

sweetmeats. The official bowed, smiled, and

ate away as if nothing unusual had happened.

The meal is given with the most costly accom-

paniments, and the writer gives some idea

of the comprehensiveness of the menu, which

includes the three great dishes of the Mongolian

epicure: bird's nest soup, shark's fin, and deer

tongue. Whether or not it be true that the Taoist

is "often an unmitigated scoundrel" those who

read Mr. Sedloe's paper will give him credit for

a very fine social instinct.

THE ART OF CLIMBING DOWN.

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS.

Prologue.

Humpty-Dumpty loc.—

I am the very model of a modern major-general;

I know the way to deal with all your grievances

ephemeral, With Jugglery like Goodman, Stewart-Lock-

hart, Mitchell-Innes, I can always jump on grambles, and I don't

see where the sin is. And—then they do it for me, while I pocket all

the screw Of a military General and civil Acting

Governor And when I put my foot down there is nothing

can be so stubborn. I fully understand, you know, that I am not

expected To vary the proceedings so inseparably con-

nected In every clime, through every time, with run-

ning the Crown Colonies, Which are to England's empire what to many

flowers pollen is; A useful institution for the spreading of

vitality, To benefit the parent flower; but as to the

morality Of making a pretence to ask the pollen's own

opinions And then to calmly follow the dictates of all

the millions Who suck the honey, and grow fat, and deal

to all remembrance Till the victims view them with despair, and

loathing, and abhorrence —Well, as to that, I must repeat, there's

naught for me to say. Such is our Constitution, and there is no other

way.

Act I.—Commerce.

Hongkong is a very fine place. It is the third

port in the world in point of tonnage. De

Vaux says so. (Oh, give us another!—Ed.)

Many ships come to Hongkong by preference,

because it is a free port, and presents such

unequalled facilities for shipping. There are no

duties, no harbour dues, nor light dues, nor

regulations to bother you; no nuisances in the

shape of excise officers smelling round and

creating trouble; no customs people boarding

the vessel and delaying the proceedings till

you have gone to anywhere else in the world instead; no

everything is free and unhampered, and so, hundreds

of ships come here instead of going to

Shanghai, or Singapore, or other places. That

is the life of Hongkong, which has absolutely

not a single resource in itself disconnected with

the shipping. There are, on the contrary, many

disadvantages. The port is not so central as

Shanghai, it could never figure prominently as a

railway terminus for a comprehensive system of

commercial lines, and the colony is established

on such a singularly inappropriate site that it is

the laughing-stock of the commercial universe

—to build a town on a hill sloping up at about

60 deg., with hardly a yard of level ground on

the whole island to build, where there is no

room to swing a cat, with the nastiest and most

unbearable climate ever invented, and surrounded

on every side by a perfect labyrinth of traps for

navigators and nests of piracy. Yet the one

advantage of its freedom from cumbersome tariff

regulations, customs watchers, and burdensome

disadvantages has made it the third port in the

world. De Vaux said so.

Very well then. Now, by thus giving your

colony a tremendous advantage which the rest

of the eastern ports have not, and never may

have, you distinctly get the edge on the other

fellows. That is easy enough. You see that the port is

flourishing and prosperous, so you say "Give me

some." Well, the port is willing enough to go

shares, even to divide the profits equally between

itself and the lords of creation at home. But

the said lords prefer to divide the said

profits between themselves, and leave the Colony

out of it. Quite right. If the Colony is to

be a success, it must be able to pay for its

defence in one last year from a score of ships

that have taken away. So the Lords of Creation

(by the way, I forgot to mention that Downing

Street is Creation) put the Colony under a

constitution so framed that the sole power is in

the hands of a Governor, preferably one who never

heard of Hongkong before, and especially one

who possesses a maximum of that genius so akin

to insanity that people can't give him any

remarks every time. Then you give his Governor

absolute power, subject of course to the afore-

said Lords of Creation, but to nobody else—and

you put him in a position to pay for his

defence in one last year from a score of ships

that have taken away. So the Lords of Creation

(by the way, I forgot to mention that Downing

Street is Creation) put the Colony under a

constitution so framed that the sole power is in

much delay in bringing the logs down to Bangkok from the splendid forests away above Chien-pai is experienced by Europeans whose special business it is to spend months up-country up river, the cutting and transport of the logs. The Minam is navigable for large steamers several miles above Bangkok, but owing to the shallowness of the bar the draught is necessarily limited to steamers of considerable length, go down and (at power) engaged in the regular carrying trade of the port to and from Singapore and Hongkong. Namely, the Scottish Oriental and "Blue funnel" boats. The whole of the vessels comprising the Royal Navy are able to enter the river, including the *Rajah Kumara* and the *Princess Alice*, and are often to be seen at anchor off the Palce landing-stage, above the business part of the town. It may be added that salt-wells have been discovered at the source of the eastern branch of the Minam where salt is procured at a depth of from 40 to 50 feet.

FLAGRANT ABUSE.
These who view that slavery is non-existent in Siam can be easily set down as wilful revellers of the truth, flatterers and deplorable toadies. Slavery of the most degrading, heart-rending, revolting description is levied throughout the realm, as also in the border provinces. Whenever you travel in Siam, in the capital, suburbs, country districts, and provincial cities and towns you meet with abject, dejected-looking slaves walking about with heavy manacles made fast to their ankles to prevent them from running away. These poor creatures, men and women, have had the letters rivetted on them by order of some so-called magistrate who has condemned them to "work" some debt. But as the amount of the monthly wages of such creatures seldom equals the monthly interest (there being, probably, at least 40 per cent per annum) the "temporary" bondage inevitably amounts to slavery for life. Sometimes, if the debt is very large, a man's wife and daughters are handed over to the tender mercies of the creditor, who, unless he deems them suitable for his harem, usually sells them to the highest bidder to be forced into a life of shocking infamy in which they must remain until the father on the mother's debt is "worked off," which seldom happens. When you realize that this abominable system of bondage is in force throughout the land and that it is levied, and the judges (some of the mark) who sentence their fellow-countrymen to such barbarous punishment are in office, not owing merit, but because of the success of their intrigues for office, are we wrong in stating that Siam is a veritable Hell upon earth and that the King, although he has undoubtedly made Bangkok look fairly decent and evinces a good deal of interest in the welfare of his subject (chiefly the Chinese portion thereof), should appeal to the treaty Powers to support him in making a clean sweep of the nobles, princes and gentry who approve of and foster such infamous customs in his dominions. But he must not do this, he must not, and therefore a large number of the ladies whom he is credited with "keeping" in a harem. The day has arrived when Chulalongkorn, Rex, has to show that he is worthy of the respect of Christendom, or that he is a weak-minded, irresponsible man who is more fit to fill a vacancy in an asylum for slothful idiots than to sit on the throne of an important kingdom. Of the two, we believe His Majesty is able to stand upon his dignity and let all his subjects know that he is King. Let us hope so.

It has been stated that the *Corvus* was totally abolished by royal decree. The decree in question was doubtless drawn up, written in faultless characters and distributed over the provinces, but the system, which is all four with slavery, still prevails to a certain extent as those who have travelled in the interior can testify. The traveller arrives at a town, calls on the burgomaster, "chow" with him and then reciprocates with a small bribe from amongst his baggage, and then says he wants so and so many horses. "All right," says the burgomaster, "I'll get you service to-morrow morning, but meanwhile you had better pay my S-servant for their hire in advance, otherwise the S-servant may attempt to overcharge you." The traveller pays—the rest is comprehensible to all, unless you don't want to know, or who might be something by knowing too much. There is no S-servant, a good deal of "pecking" connected with the journey of officials to country districts which His Majesty would do well to inquire into thoroughly if he desires his realm to have any appreciable effect in alleviating the condition of the poor. There is neither S-servant nor S-servant in Siam in respect of "servants" in full swing in Siam in respect of which grave injustice seems upon several of the Treasury officials. The heads of departments (here are some few exceptions, however) draw the monthly allowance for the salaries due to their subordinates from the Treasury regularly, but fail to pay their employees for months at a time. Meanwhile these worthy chiefs are lending the money out at high rates of interest and often succeed in making in four months as much profit on their S-servants as they would have made in a year if they had paid them. This is the way in which the Government employees are in a position to profit by reason of prompt payment of their salaries, their chiefs—in some cases Royal Highnesses—are keeping the harvest while they are running into debt and living upon "tick." A deplorable, anomalous state of affairs that should be quashed at once.

Gambling is licensed, and "bells" are to be found all over the capital, suburbs, and country towns. The chief evils are, then, gambling, serfdom, slavery, the *Corvus*, the corruption of justice, polygamy, bribery, peculation, inflicting for office, and the illegality of ministers suggesting reforms to their Sovereign, though, as above stated, Prince Sawani did so, and it is understood that the Royal Highnesses Devawongse (the Foreign Minister), and Damrong (Minister of Education and Chief of the Medical Department) have done so recently.

The system of farming taxes results, it may be added, in great oppression, and it is well known that should a man be too powerful for the local magnate or the tax-gatherer (usually a Chinaman) to make him disgorge, he has often been summoned before a powerful official who "fixes him" properly. The defence set up for the maintenance of the system of farming taxes is indicative of the degraded condition of society, generally. It is, that the abolition of the practice would result in the people "striking" into themselves "more" wiles, more slaves to drive, and, in fine, be equally corrupt and oppressive. Comments superfluous. Recently Mr. Williams of the London Custom House, who came out to Siam to advise the Siamese Chief of the department, went home, and it is said that he is so disgusted with all he saw and discovered whilst in Siam that he has refused to return unless fully empowered, as Sir Robert Hart is in China, to reorganize the Service and completely suppress bribery and corruption. If the King is wise he will have Williams back at once, but if not—Dr. Costa, a Portuguese, has been "running" the Customs in Siam for some years. Amen.

The new Finance Adviser, whoever he turns out to be (probably an Englishman), should take his cue from Mr. Williams, if he has any respect for himself, and insist on full power being vested in him prior to undertaking what can be nothing short of a Herculean task.

(To be continued.)

RIOTS AT TEK-HUA.

We took notice some time ago of the disturbances which originated at Tek-hua in consequence of the increase of the salt tax. We now hear that the high authorities have again had to send troops to the spot—1,000 men were dispatched on Sunday last. It is reported that the riot had extended to other two districts called Tung-chun and Yew-ki and that if the authorities do not succeed at once in suppressing it, nothing can prevent the movement assuming formidable dimensions, and very likely end in a big rebellion. The worst part of the report is, that while originally the trouble was simply a local salt riot, the Koloai Hui have since taken advantage of the rising to join in it, and are now the leaders of it. This is the news which reaches us. It is said that they have a flag with four large Chinese characters, *Kuan he min pei* meaning "tyranny creates a rebellion" written upon it, and that their tactics at the present moment are to retreat to their mountain fastnesses when the soldiers arrive, and come out again when the troops retire, and their intention is to follow up this plan until they receive a supply of war materials. The rioters know well that the authorities have big guns, which they could not carry up the high mountain and they hope by means of this guerrilla fighting to attain, in time, the object they have in view.

It is rumored that consequent upon these disturbances, the Salt Commissioner, Lung (formerly acting Provincial Judge) has been deprived of his position, and will have to give up his seat of Office as soon as his successor is appointed. These rumours, together with the extra vigilance shown on the walls in the way of watches, is creating an unsettled feeling in the City.—*Foochow Echo*.

(Since this was published the news of a terrific battle and the slaughter of 3,500 imperial troops was published in this journal.—Ed., H.K. Tel.)

"CRIMPING"

We comment to the attention of our legislators the startling facts set forth in the subjoined article in *Parley* from the pen of "A Practical Seaman," and would ask them whether they are aware that the Chinese "crimp" is very much on the increase in this fair "Island home." We would add that "crimping" is morally certain to flourish in all seaports unless some system can be devised whereby Government can effectively control the shipment of crews and protect them from the ravages of voracious bullocks, land-sharks and Skylocks.

The time being ripe and public interest strongly aroused on the crimping question, I do not see why my mouth should be closed on a subject about which I happen to know a good deal. The law directs that anyone receiving, directly or indirectly, any money for obtaining any person a situation on board any ship shall be guilty of crimping and punished accordingly, if the receiver is a sailor and the thief, certainly, is a black-coated gentleman should not be a sailor while the crimp, the actual receiver of the money, is punished. Some of the gentry I refer to are prime movers in the game, and so long as they are allowed to have the ball at their feet, crimping will never be put a stop to. Not only sailors, but mates, engineers, and masters have had to pay blood-money, and very many could testify to this had they only the moral courage to do so. I do not condemn all these officers, for in many cases an officer who has a wife and children would sooner pay the money than see his family starve. What I most blame them for is that when they get employment they often accept from the crimp a bribe for the shipping of their crews—thereby placing themselves in the power of the crimp to whom they owe their jobs; and, as they dare not turn round upon the man, they get deeper in the mire and more completely in his power. It cannot be a pleasant thing for an officer to reflect that the few paltry shillings he has accepted have been robbed from the wives and families of the men under his charge; that the crimp assures him that he has not got any scruples in taking the money as it would be got out of the seamen all the same—the man having to pay whichever way the cat jumps. The unfortunates may ask why this state of things should be tolerated. A sailor, by the nature of his profession, receives his wages at the end of a voyage in a lump sum, and this, after he has been separated from his fellow men and boxed up for several months on board a ship, seems to him practically limitless. He comes once more into the world with childish delight, all the past being forgotten, all the good and bad he has experienced during the voyage thrown to the winds, and, however bitter his past experience may have been, he falls a ready prey to the land-sharks who are waiting for him. If it should be said that this can hardly be the case in these days, I reply that crimping goes on as much as ever, though not, perhaps, in quite the old guise. As the sailor improves, so does the crimp; in fact, crimping "up to date" is a science, and were it not for the institutions that have been established, and the strong hand of the law, the sailor's lot would now be a very different one. 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